

in this past year alone. Some of you were instrumental in one way or another in Operation Desert Storm. You share in the triumph we won for freedom abroad and, of some noted significance, of unity at home.

Some devoted your efforts to stirring economic growth here at home, creating opportunity for businesses and farmers and workers. Others dedicated your career to establishing ties abroad, bringing security and jobs to the people of this country in the process. You worked on child nutrition programs, directed the census, planned water resource projects, managed scientific research, oversaw economic analysis, helped reform the Federal pay system, managed aeronautical research, formulated human rights programs, managed veterans care, led drug investigations. The list goes on and on. In other words, through putting into practice administration programs, you touched the daily lives and shaped the future of all Americans.

And so, I am proud to participate in this program. I wanted to extend my congratula-

tions to all for living by the words of Abraham Lincoln, who said, "I do the very best I know how, the very best I can; and I mean to keep on doing so until the end." Your country is grateful. And we thank you for your service.

And now, Connie, let's get on with the main business at hand. Thank you, and congratulations to each and every one of you.

[At this point, the awards were presented.]

Thank you all very much, and to all of you, congratulations. This is special, and it sends a wonderful message about the quality of our public service across the whole country. So keep it up.

*Note: The President spoke at 10:35 a.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to James B. Busey IV, Acting Secretary of Transportation; William S. Sessions, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and Richard B. Truly, Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.*

## Remarks on Environmental Policy January 23, 1992

*The President.* Let me just say that I've had an upbeat and very impressive briefing from Administrator Bill Reilly, from Secretary Watkins, and from Chairman Mike Deland on some of our ongoing efforts to protect America's precious environment. The budget that I will release next week I think demonstrates our continuing commitment to the environment in a way that is consistent with efforts to create economic growth and to preserve and create jobs.

In EPA's budget we're providing significant increases for Superfund; implementing the Clean Air Act; for enforcing our environmental laws, and that's critical; and protecting important resources like the Great Lakes, the Gulf of Mexico, and the Chesapeake Bay: a strong program. Our budget includes specific grants to help clean up the water in some of our major coastal cities: Boston and New York on the east coast;

Los Angeles, San Diego, Seattle on the west coast; and then back to Baltimore on the east coast.

This budget is going to include \$200 million, double the amount enacted last year, for pollution control in the border area—Bill's just back from there, I understand—along from California across to Texas.

Secretary Jim Watkins and I have tried hard making a major effort to clean up the Federal facilities at which his Department, the Department of Energy, has manufactured nuclear weapons materials. That's been going on now for 3 years. And next week's budget will reflect a major step forward in that commitment, a \$1.1 billion increase, 25 percent above last year's level. The 5.5 billion that I'll put in my budget for cleaning up Federal facilities is more than triple the amount included in the '89

budget when Secretary Watkins and I arrived.

And finally, our budget is going to increase funding in our commitment to the program known as America the Beautiful, expanding and improving our national parks, our forests, our wildlife refuges, and our recreation land. The budget is going to increase the program to about \$1.9 billion, more than double the amount devoted to parks and the outdoors in 1989.

Now, included in that amount is a major expansion, from 23 million to 60 million, for our partnership with the States for the creation of State parks. Now, this is an innovative partnership approach, one that leverages the Federal dollars to get the most for every dollar. And I think you'll see this as a wave of the future in terms of guaranteeing the precious environment that means so much to our country.

So, I really want to thank Bill Reilly, thank the Secretary, thank the Chairman, Michael Deland, for coming over and to say I look forward to working with them and the other members of the Cabinet to win support for this budget on Capitol Hill and for continuing to be responsible stewards of the environment. I think we've got a positive record. We've certainly got able, committed individuals, three of whom are with me right here, working this problem. And I think this preview of coming attractions on the budget will be good news for all of us who share our concern about America's environment.

So, I think Bill, as I understand the plan, is going to go in and take some questions in the press room on this expansion of this, what I've announced here today. And I think this will be well received.

#### *Domestic Initiatives*

*Q.* Mr. President, in recent days you've been busy on many different fronts, education, trade, now the environment—

*The President.* Recent years, yes.

*Q.* Well, recent days also, sir, and recent years, but is this at all reflective of the, perhaps, concern about dropping polls? And are you concerned about falling polls?

*The President.* No. What I think it does is show a continuing interest in domestic affairs. I've cited some history here, what's

been accomplished over 3 years. But we're in an election year, and you get all kinds of charges and countercharges. And I think people realize there's been this commitment. Some of this commitment to the domestic side has been overshadowed by the fantastic changes that have taken place around the world. But I think if you take a look at my schedules and my own use of personal time, you'll see that this isn't anything new, just a continued commitment. We've made great progress. And I keep getting reassured by Bill Reilly and by Mike Deland and in his field by Jim Watkins. But we're just going to keep on. And polls go up one day and down the next.

#### *Unemployment Benefits*

*Q.* Mr. President, 5 months ago you vetoed one unemployment extension, and you blocked the second. Now we're told that you're going to back an extension on your extension. Isn't this an election-year conversion?

*The President.* What we did before is to guarantee that the extensions were within the Federal budget because, you see, I think the American people are also concerned about the Federal Government spending too much. And what I did was stand for a program that would alleviate the suffering and would get the checks to individuals, but did it inside the budget agreement. So, it wasn't a conversion; it was fighting for what was right, the taxpayer as well as those who were hurting. And we prevailed. We prevailed in both instances. But you stay tuned for the next chapter. It will be coming up.

#### *Disarmament*

*Q.* How about the disarmament, Mr. President? Can you tell us anything about that?

*The President.* Maybe I'll have something to say about that in the State of the Union Message.

*Note: The President spoke at 11:17 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.*